

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

*Angela Stephens, Assistant Communications Director,
(202) 523-3240, ext. 14*

WASHINGTON-The U.S. Commission on International Religion Freedom (USCIRF), an independent, bipartisan federal agency, discussed the need for a U.S. special envoy on Sudan (including Darfur) during a meeting this week in Washington with Sudanese First Vice President and President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit. The Commission recommends that the difficult task of achieving a genuine, comprehensive and permanent peace requires the prompt appointment of an envoy with wholehearted Administration support.

Following the meeting, USCIRF Vice Chair Michael Cromartie said, "The North-South peace achieved in Sudan through so much effort is at risk. The difficult task of sustaining the peace requires prompt appointment of a full-time envoy who commands wholehearted Administration support. This envoy's sole responsibility should be to coordinate U.S. efforts toward the complete implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and of the Darfur Peace Agreement so that a just and lasting peace can be secured for all of Sudan, including Darfur. This idea is based on a successful precedent, also recommended by the Commission: President Bush's appointment in 2001 of former Senator John Danforth as Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan."

The Commission visited Sudan in January 2006 to assess the state of religious freedom and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended a two-decades-long civil war between the North and South. The Commission found that there have been significant delays and shortcomings in the CPA's implementation, raising questions regarding the sincerity of the commitment of the National Congress Party in the Government of National Unity. Moreover, the religious freedom and other human rights protections agreed to in the CPA and enshrined in Sudan's Interim National Constitution have yet to result in significant changes in

practice in government-controlled areas of the North.

In March, the Commission was joined by Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), and Congressman Donald M. Payne (D-NJ) on Capitol Hill for the release of the Commission's *Policy Focus on Sudan*, which includes recommendations for U.S. policy as a result of the findings from the Commission's visit. At that event, Congressman Wolf and House Minority Leader Pelosi called for a special envoy to be appointed to coordinate U.S. efforts on achieving implementation of the CPA and ending atrocities in the western Darfur region. The proposal for a special envoy, supported by the Commission, also gained the support of at least 119 members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans.

The Commission's latest recommendations on Sudan can be found in its [2006 Annual Report](#).

The Commission publication [Policy Focus on Sudan](#) can be found [here](#).

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Felice D. Gaer ,
- Michael Cromartie ,